This week, the Mediation Bill 2017 will reach Second Stage of discussion. The Bill was first presented at the beginning of February 2017; it has been highlighted as a piece of priority legislation in the Spring/Summer Legislative Programme. You can view the full Legislative Programme here.

This Bill would provide for setting in place systems to “facilitate the settlement of civil disputes by mediation”. It would also, “provide for the recognition of a body as the Mediation Council of Ireland for the purposes of this Act and to require that Council to make reports to the Minister for Justice and Equality as regards mediation in the State”.


You can view the Bill here.

Appointments

Wednesday 22 February
The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) have announced that they have appointed a new Chief Executive Officer.

The appointee, Geraldine Larkin, has previous experience as CEO of both the Irish Greyhound Board and the Private Security Authority. She also spent a decade of her career at the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. She also has a BA in Public Administration (IPA) and an MBA in Technology Management (Open University).

Julie O’Neill, Chair of NSAI, welcomed Ms Larkin; she noted that the new CEO will be joining the state agency “at an exciting time for the organisation” with the implementation of their 2020 Strategy.

Ms Larkin also commented on her appointment, saying: “I am delighted to be taking up this important and challenging position with NSAI. Together with the Board and staff, I look forward to building on the focus and scale of the NSAI service offering planned for the next five years.”

Priority Mediation Bill reaches Second Stage

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This Bill would provide for setting in place systems to “facilitate the settlement of civil disputes by mediation”. It would also, “provide for the recognition of a body as the Mediation Council of Ireland for the purposes of this Act and to require that Council to make reports to the Minister for Justice and Equality as regards mediation in the State”.


You can view the Bill here.

Archives Bill to undergo Pre-Legislative Scrutiny

Pre-Legislative Scrutiny will begin on Thursday 2 March for the National Archives (Amendment) Bill 2016. This Bill would bring Irish archiving practices with those that Britain introduced in 2013. This would decrease the threshold for archiving from 30 years to 20 years.

These Departmental Records include files, plans, books, photographs and video and sound recordings.

In a Dáil session on Questions on Promised Legislation (Thursday, 23 February 2017; view the transcript here.) Brendan Howlin TD also called attention to the fact that Britain were also releasing two years’ worth of records “each year up to 2022”.

No indication was made as to whether this would be reflected in the Bill.
Updates on Current Developments Impacting on Freedom of Information in Ireland

Key themes to be addressed

• The impact of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 on public organisations
• The Information Commissioner’s perspective on compliance with the FOI regime and identifying best practice in managing FOI requests
• An analysis of recent decisions of the Information Commissioner and the Courts on FOI cases
• The perspective of the Central Policy unit in DPER on the operation of FOI policy
• Practical issues for FOI Officers concerning requests for the release of different categories of confidential information
• FOI requests and cross border bodies
• The requesters perspective – an analysis from a media commentator on latest trends in the operation of the FOI Act
• Analysis of the results of a survey of FOI officers on current issues and current practices impacting on the operation of the FOI Act in Ireland

For more information, click here

Keynote Speaker: Paschal Donohoe TD

Paschal Donohoe is the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. Prior to this appointment he served, from July 2014-May 2016, as the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. Paschal has also held the position as the Minister for European Affairs at the Department of An Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs from July 2013-July 2014. Paschal was formerly the Chair of Ireland’s Future in Europe Direachtas Sub-Committee, as well as a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Earlybird Offer

€275*

*includes conference registration, speaker materials, refreshments and three-course lunch. Please note that 23% VAT applies on conferences. Group and membership discounts may apply. For more information, call us on (01) 819 8500.

Other Speakers

Garrett Fennell is a solicitor and a specialist consultant in regulatory and public affairs. He will be chairing this conference.

Annette Hogan is a partner in the McCann FitzGerald’s and specialises in data protection and freedom of information.

Paul Lavery is the head of the McCann FitzGerald’s Technology & Innovation Group and advises on a wide range of information technology, intellectual property, data protection, confidentiality and freedom of information issues.

Daniel McConnell is a Political Correspondent at the Irish Examiner.

More TBC...
On the Blog

Interview Tips for Civil Service and Public Sector Interviews
Tina Kinirons
Read here

Prevention is Better than Cure – Improving Dignity at Work
Sile O'Donnell
Read here

Why bother with Regulatory Impact Assessment?
Tom Ferris
Read here
PAI Update on RIAs will take place on Friday 10 March. More information here.

Preparing for the new EU General Data Protection Regulation
MB Donnelly of the ODPC
Read here
PAI Update on the GDPR will take place on Monday 6 March. More information here.

On Post-Brexit Data Transfers
Read here

Upcoming Training

Update Series:
Sale and Development of Public Land
Friday 3 March
9am to 1pm

Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Simon Coveney TD, has told the members of the Dáil that state-owned land may be useful in achieving the goal of Pillar 2 of the Action Plan for Housing: build more houses. This would involve local authorities selling or developing on land holdings in order to provide more housing units. It is expected that such development will contain a mix of tenures: social housing, low-cost housing, starter homes and private housing. This Update will look at the practicalities and challenges of this development.

For more information, including speakers, click here.
Tuesday 28 February

2.00 p.m. Leaders’ Questions (FF, SF, RIG, SD-GP) (32 mins)

2.32 p.m. Order of Business (30 mins)
Motion re. Extended Take Back Date for Report of Services by the Defence Forces with the United Nations (Dept of Defence) (without debate)
Motion re. Reasoned Opinion (Committee on Justice and Equality) (without debate)
Motion re. Capital Carryover (Dept of Public Expenditure and Reform) (without debate)

3.02 p.m. Taoiseach’s Questions (45 mins)

3.47 p.m. P.Q.s: Oral – Minister for Finance (90 mins)

5.17 p.m. Topical Issues (48 mins)
Private Notice Question (if any)

6.05 p.m. Government Business (115 mins)
Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Bill 2016 [Seanad] – Second Stage (Dept of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)
Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2016 – Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Dept of Justice and Equality)

8.00 p.m. Private Members Business (Labour): Competition (Amendment) Bill 2016 [Seanad] - Second Stage

10.00 p.m. Dáil Adjourns

Wednesday 1 March

12.00 p.m. Leaders’ Questions (FF, SF, LAB, AAA-PBP) (32 mins)

12.32 p.m. Questions on Promised Legislation (30 mins)

1.02 p.m. Taoiseach’s Questions (45 mins)

1.47 p.m. P.Q.s: Oral – Minister for Education and Skills (90 mins)

3.17 p.m. Topical Issues (48 mins)
Private Notice Question (if any)

4.05 p.m. SOS (40 mins)

4.45 p.m. Private Members Business (Fianna Fáil): Motion re. Insurance Industry (120 mins)

6.45 p.m. Government Business (210 mins)
Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Bill 2016 [Seanad] - Second Stage (resumed) (Dept of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation)
Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2016 – Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Dept of Justice and Equality)
Mediation Bill 2017 – Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Dept of Justice and Equality)

10.15 p.m. Dáil Adjourns

Thursday 2 March

12.00 p.m. Leaders’ Questions (FF, SF, LAB, I4C) (32 mins)

12.32 p.m. Questions on Promised Legislation (15 mins)

12.47 p.m. Weekly divisions (43 mins)

1.30 p.m. Government Business (120 mins)
Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2016 – Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Dept of Justice and Equality)
Mediation Bill 2017 – Order for Second Stage and Second Stage (Dept of Justice and Equality)

3.30 p.m. P.Q.s: Oral – Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (90 mins)

5.00 p.m. Topical Issues (48 mins)
Private Notice Question (if any)

5.48 p.m. Committee Report/ PMB: (120 mins)
Employment Equality (Abolition of Mandatory Retirement Age) Bill 2016 - Second Stage

7.48 p.m. Dáil Adjourns
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Tuesday 28 February</th>
<th>Wednesday 1 March</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Commencement Matters</td>
<td>10.30 a.m.</td>
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<td>3.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Order of Business&lt;br&gt;Motion regarding a reasoned opinion of the Committee on Justice and Equality - without debate (Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice and Equality)</td>
<td>11.30 a.m.</td>
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<td>4.45 p.m.</td>
<td>Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Amendment Bill 2016 - Second Stage (Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment)</td>
<td>12.45 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>3.30 p.m. Private Members Business</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.30 p.m.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5.30 p.m. Seanad Adjourns</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.30 p.m.</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 a.m.</td>
<td>Commencement Matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 a.m.</td>
<td>Order of Business&lt;br&gt;Heritage Bill 2016 - Committee Stage (resumed) (Minister for Arts, Heritage, Rural, Regional and Gaeltacht Affairs)</td>
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This week’s Committee Meetings

Tuesday 28 February

Public Accounts
CR3, LH 2000 11 a.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Future Funding of Domestic Water Services (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 12 noon
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Budgetary Oversight
CR4, LH 2000 4 p.m.
AGENDA: The Report on the Revised Macroeconomic Indicators [Representatives from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Central Bank of Ireland]

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (Joint)
CR3, LH 2000 4 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 5 p.m.
(ii) The effect of the proposed withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit) on the energy market in Ireland.
[Representatives from CER (Commission for Energy Regulation), Eirgrid, ESB and SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland)]

Thursday 2 March

Health (Select)
CR4, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: 2017 Revised Estimates for Public Services – Vote 38 (Department of Health) [Minister for Health]

Public Accounts
CR3, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: (i) Business of the Committee;
(ii) Appropriation Accounts 2015
Vote 34: Environment, Community and Local Government
GAG Report 2015
Chapter 4: Central Government Funding of local authorities
Chapter 5: Progress on Land Aggregation
[Officials from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government]

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 10 a.m.
AGENDA: Financial Services Ombudsman’s Bureau - Strategic Plan 2017 and Tracker Mortgage Issues [Mr. Ger Deering, Financial Services Ombudsman]

Dáil Business
Room 2, LH 10.30 a.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Wednesday 1 March

Future of Healthcare (Select)
CR3, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

Justice and Equality (joint)
CR2, LH 2000 9 a.m.
AGENDA: Penal Reform [Victims Rights Alliance]

Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (Select)
CR4, LH 2000 9.30 a.m.
AGENDA: 2017 Revised Estimates for Public Services - Vote 34 (Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government) [Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government]

Transport, Tourism and Sport (Joint)
CR1, LH 2000 11 a.m.
AGENDA: Session A: 11 a.m. The current situation in Bus Éireann (resumed) [Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport]
Session B: 1.30 p.m. Road Safety Strategy (resumed) [Assistant Commissioner, Michael Finn, Roads Policing/ Major Events/ Emergency Management, An Garda Síochána; Ms. Donna Price, Irish Road Victims Association and Ms. Susan Gray, Promoting Awareness, Responsibility and Care on our Roads (PARC Road Safety Group)]

Future Funding of Domestic Water Services (Joint)
CR2, LH 2000 1.30 p.m.
AGENDA: Private Meeting

European Union Affairs (Joint)
CR3, LH 2000 2 p.m.
AGENDA: Briefing on the work of the European Parliament Information Office in Dublin. [Mr. James Temple-Smithson, Head of Office, European Parliament Information Office]

Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Joint)
CR4, LH 2000 2.15 p.m.
AGENDA: Session A: 2.30 p.m. i) An Bille um Chartlann Náisiúnta (Leasú) agus cur i ngníomh reatha an Achta um Chartlann Náisiúnta, 1986
ii) Glird a theastaíonn a dhéanamh chun pobal tuaithe inmharthana a chaomhnú (áitgíl) [Aire agus Oifigigh ón Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta, Gnóthaí Ráilíní, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta ]
Seisiún B: 4.30 p.m. Láithreáin stairiúil mhuirí a chosaint lena n-áirítear láithreán stairiúil an Lusitania agus tumadhreacht ag na láithreán seo a cheadúnú [Oifigigh ón Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta, Gnóthaí Ráilíní, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta] 
Session A: 2.30 p.m. i) The National Archives (Amendment) Bill and the current implementation of the National Archives Act 1986
ii) What it takes to maintain a viable rural community (resumed) [Minister and Officials from the Dept. for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs]
Session B: 4.30 p.m. The Protection of marine historical sites including the Lusitania historical site and the licensing of diving at these sites [Officials from the Dept. of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs]
In 2016, Public Affairs Ireland began the roll-out of our New Entrant programmes. These two-day courses are developed with expert input to ensure attendees gain the skills required at their grade. For those who are established in their role, these courses can serve as a refresher for all the competencies needed to at your current grade or ease the transition into the next.

Due to the success of our Core Skills courses, we have now launched regional delivery of our Core Skills for Clerical Officers (COs) and Core Skills for Executive Officers (EOs) taking place in the Killeshin Hotel in Portlaoise.

### Core Skills for COs
On successful completion of this module, learners will have a firm understanding of the following core skills and how to apply them to be an effective CO (and grade equivalent):

- Team-work: how to effectively work with your team members
- Effective records and information management (FOI, Data Protection & Procurement overview)
- Strategies for the effective delivery of results through planning, time management and problem-solving skills
- Customer Service & Communication Skills
- Wellbeing in the workplace
- Self-Development opportunities

**Upcoming Dates**
Monday 6 & Tuesday 7 March
[Click here for more information or to book](#)

### Core Skills for EOs
On successful completion of this module, learners will have a strong understanding of many topics, including:

- Interpersonal & Communication Skills
- Analysis & Decision Making (FOI, Data Protection and Procurement)
- Project Management & Delivery of Results
- People Management
- Wellbeing in the workplace
- Self-Development

**Upcoming Dates**
Thursday 2 & Friday 3 March
[Click here for more information or to book](#)